

JUNE 2017

\$3.75

VOL. 169 • NO. 2

# The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849

## Advancing the Congregational Way

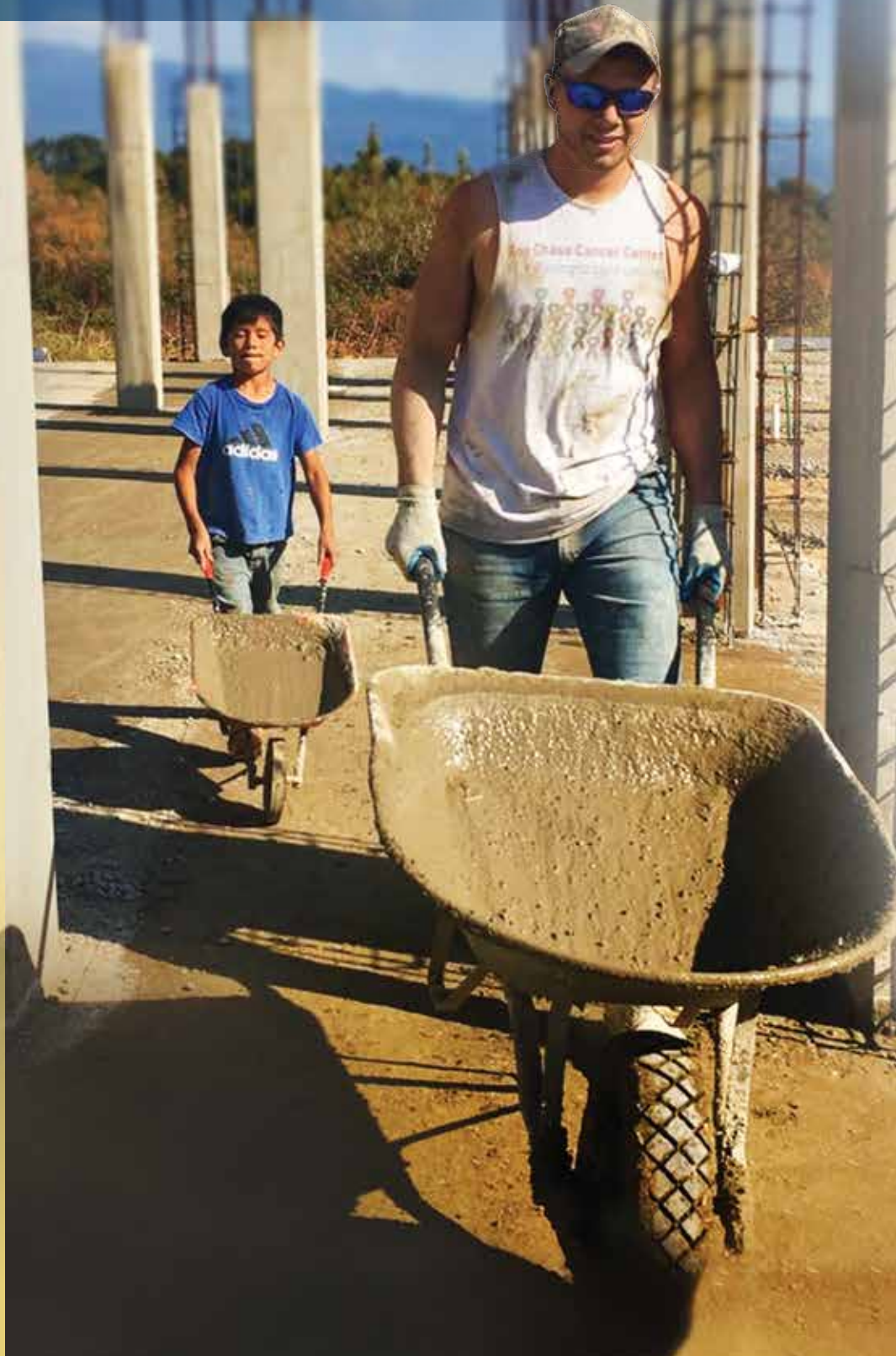
140 YEARS  
& COUNTING:  
FCC CERADO

HOW DOES  
YOUR CHURCH  
*INVEST?*

*Loving All  
Our Neighbors:*  
OMAN



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### COVER PHOTO:

Construction work is underway at Fishers of Men, Mexico. One of the volunteers was photographed as he headed for another load of cement to pour the floor of the main house. David, eight, the youngest son of mission co-founder Julie Zaragoza, can be seen following along with his own little wheelbarrow!

### EDITORIAL STATEMENT

All content in *The Congregationalist* appears by the authority of the editor.

We reserve freedom of expression to our authors and freedom of opinion to our readers.

Except for service information clearly sponsored by the **National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC)** or its component parts, content does not necessarily reflect policies and opinions of the NACCC.

Neither *The Congregationalist* nor the NACCC has a creed or holds positions on social or theological issues; but we recognize the authority of each local church to do so for itself, if and as it wishes, and we encourage thoughtful and respectful discussion of our agreements and differences.

# OUR Voyage TOGETHER

## To Be A Congregational Church

It would be fair to say, I think, that we NACCC Congregationalists may be best known for our ecclesiology, that is for our understanding of the nature of the church and how a church should function. The statement we most often make is that we believe each church is self-governing and, thus, autonomous. We do believe that this self-governance is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and acknowledge that Christ is the head of the church as that church seeks to fulfill the will of God in the world; yet, we acknowledge that no other agency makes decisions for the church but the church itself.

In the 1880 book, *The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years*, the author, Henry Martyn Dexter, that 19th century scholar of Congregationalism, concluded with a lecture titled "Things More Clearly Seen." In this lecture he asserted that there are 12 qualities the modern investigator can discern about the Congregational Way. His third point within the twelve was: "Essence of a Congregational Church in being two things: 1) a Complete Entity; 2) in Sisterly Relations with like Bodies."



By Michael Chittum,  
Executive Director

*Dexter asserted:*

*But to be Congregational, a church must believe and practice these two fundamental principles: it must be a body segregated by mutual covenant from all vital relations with other church entities; and so, under Christ, acquiring separate and complete existence, it must hold itself not merely in amicable – that it must live in toward all the good – but in fraternal relations with kindred organisms. When the former only is true, it is an Independent; when the latter also is true, it is a Congregational church.<sup>1</sup>*

Dexter described a church that is a complete and separate entity from other churches, but, in order for that church truly to be Congregational, that church must be in fraternal relations with other, kindred churches.

We put this into practice as our churches have relations within various local or regional associations. Yet, there is another dimension to this fraternal relationship. On a national level, this is best seen in the annual gathering of the member churches of our National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

Let me then encourage you to make every effort to be part of the 2017 Annual Meeting of the NACCC to be held at Piedmont College, Demorest, GA. In doing so, you give evidence of being a true Congregational church.

Grace and Peace,  
Michael

<sup>1</sup> Henry Martyn Dexter, *The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years, as Seen in its Literature: With Special Reference to Certain Recondite, Neglected, or Disputed Passages. In Twelve Lectures, Delivered on the Southworth Foundation in the Theological Seminary at Andover, Mass, 1876-1879*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880) 695.

# Strangers AND PILGRIMS



WASHINGTON GLADDEN  
(1836 – 1918)

Born in 1836, Washington Gladden served churches in New England at first. Sydney Ahlstrom points out that Gladden “was among the few that counseled moderation . . . after Lincoln’s assassination. He pointed out that Booth got little or no applause in the South. But Gladden admitted that his words were very coldly received, affecting the course of the nation about as much ‘as the chirping of the swallows on the telegraph pole affects the motion of the Twentieth Century Limited.’”<sup>217</sup>

But Gladden’s influence was strongest when he served for more than thirty years at First Congregational Church in Columbus, Ohio, beginning in the 1880’s. He was among those who questioned the authority of the Bible and who supported Darwinian evolution. According to James Sawyer, “He once urged his denomination to refuse a substantial donation from Standard Oil Company, calling it ‘tainted money.’”<sup>218</sup> Norris Magnuson said that Gladden “has been called the father of the social gospel.”<sup>219</sup>

The Social Gospel movement was most famously championed by Walter Rauschenbusch, a pastor in the German Baptist denomination. Just as Gladden was influenced by Horace Bushnell before him, so Rauschenbusch acknowledged his debt to Gladden. Rauschenbusch wrote in *A Theology for the Social Gospel*: “The social gospel is the old message of salvation, but enlarged and intensified. The individualistic gospel has taught us to see the sinfulness of every human heart and has inspired us with faith in the willingness and power of God to save every soul that comes to him. But it has not given us an adequate understanding of the sinfulness of the social order and its share in the sins of all individuals within it.”<sup>220</sup> Gladden and Rauschenbusch died in the same year, 1918.

217 Ahlstrom, 688, note.

218 Sawyer, 33.

219 Norris A. Magnuson, “Social Gospel, The,” in Elwell, 1028.

220 Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), 5.

George Fry, writing in *The Congregationalist* in March 1975, told about Gladden’s sense of humor. A businessman was introduced to Gladden as “Dr. Gladden” and naturally assumed that he was a physician. “Sir, where do you practice?” he asked. Gladden chuckled and answered, “Oh, I don’t practice, I just preach.”<sup>221</sup> However, Fry reports, not everyone was charmed by Gladden: Billy Sunday said these words, apparently about Gladden and his followers: “They’re a bad lot, Lord Jesus, a bad lot. Let me give you a tip, Lord Jesus. If you go after those fellows, you’d better put on your rubber gloves.”<sup>222</sup>

Other famous people were more

sympathetic. Theodore Roosevelt, then the police commissioner of New York City, spoke from Gladden’s pulpit. City planners were influenced by Gladden’s plans for urban renewal. Gladden himself entered politics, being elected to the Columbus City Council for a two-year term. Although he never formally became a socialist, Gladden did advocate public ownership of utilities and worker management of factories.

Gladden was dismayed at the use of evolutionary theory by the “Social Darwinists:” “What men call ‘natural law,’ by which they mean the law of greed and strife . . . is not a natural law; it is unnatural; it is a crime against nature; the law of brotherhood is the only

natural law. The law of nature is the law of sympathy, of fellowship, of mutual help and service.”<sup>223</sup>

Our National Association has a Washington Gladden Society, dedicated to “applying the insights of the Social Gospel Movement to the important, controversial ethical and theological issues of our own times. . . .”<sup>224</sup>

Adapted and reprinted with permission from *The Congregational Minute* by Robert Hellam. (Seaside, Calif.: Robert Hellam, 2012.)

221 C. George Fry, “Washington Gladden: Congregationalist,” *The Congregationalist*, March 1975, 10, in Larson.

222 *Ibid.*, 12.

223 *Ibid.*

224 “Washington Gladden Society” <http://washingtongladdensociety.org/about.html> (accessed 29 Apr 2012).

# Along THE WAY

## FCC In Cape Coral Celebrates The Rev. Dr. Dewey Gierke's Ordination Anniversary

On January 14, 2017, nearly 100 congregants, friends, fellow ministers, and family members of the Rev. Dr. Dewey Gierke gathered at a restaurant to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his ordination.

The event was in the planning stage for more than a year to give family members and friends ample time to make travel arrangements. Family members traveled from Connecticut, Michigan, and Washington, and several members of Rev. Gierke's previous church, Florence Congregational Church, came from Massachusetts for the occasion.

We were able to keep the celebration a surprise - no mean feat for a small congregation such as ours. Rev. Dewey believed he was attending a joint luncheon of our men's and women's

fellowship groups, which normally meet separately each month. He was truly surprised and as close to speechless as any of us have ever seen him!

We were delighted that the Rev. Dr. Michael Chittum came for the celebration and offered insightful remarks and an opening prayer. Following the meal, the Rev. E. Neil Hunt spoke about Rev. Dewey's deep understanding of the Congregational Way. Then we turned the microphone over to Rev. Dewey.

It was a joy for us to organize this event for our remarkable pastor, who

does so much for us all at First Congregational Church in Cape Coral, Florida.

*Submitted by: Maggi Payne, Year-Round Delegate, First Congregational Church*



*Rev. Dr. Dewey and Dr. Helen Gierke*

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## NACCC Honors Long-Time Member

On January 22, during morning worship, Ernest Alden "Ernie" Chandler was awarded the NACCC's Christian Life Award. The award is one that was originated by NACCC Executive Secretary Tom Richard over 15 years ago. Local NACCC-member churches may request the award to nationally recognize the long-term service of lay leaders. This is the highest honor awarded by NACCC at the specific request of a local church.

The award recognizes Ernie Chandler, a member of First Congregational Church of Marshfield, Massachusetts, since 1941, for his service to on the boards of Trustees, Diaconate, and Music, as well as Handicrafters, Gardening for

God Committee, and the Organ Fund Committee. He was also a founding member and President of the Winslow Village, an independent housing facility sponsored by the church.

Ernie was a member of the Board of Trustees and organist of the Brant Rock Chapel for 70 years. He has been organist for FCC of Marshfield since 1978. Along with Kendrick Williams, he helped install the church's pipe organ.

*Submitted by:  
Rev. Dr. Thomas Richard,  
Interim Minister  
First Congregational Church  
of Marshfield*



*Steve Hight, First Congregational Church of Marshfield moderator, presents the Christian Life Award to Ernie Chandler*

## *Our Stairway To Heaven*

**T**his year, Second Congregational Church of Warren, Maine, celebrates 189 years of coming together to worship and in fellowship as the body of Jesus Christ. Our church building was dedicated on January 16, 1833, and our original steeple was added in 1855, but destroyed in the Gale of 1869. A new steeple was built the following year. Fast forward 147 years, and it needs extensive repair!

At the end of summer 2015, we started working with Maine Preservation/Maine Steeples Project to qualify for a Steeple Restoration Grant. Before we could apply for that we needed to apply for a Steeple Assessment Grant, which was granted at very little expense to us. The assessment was completed in October 2015, with an estimated cost of \$148,000.

In May 2016, we were awarded our Steeple Restoration Grant in the amount of \$60,000 and received the first half of the grant, with the other half to be awarded at the completion of the project. Our congregation has matched the grant with monetary donations, as well as fundraising projects ranging from suppers to yard sales to bottle drives. We still have a way to go, but are making progress day by day and fundraiser by fundraiser. We also thank our community for all the support it has provided. It really does take a village to care for a church approaching 200 years of age.

The restoration began in August 2016 and continues with a goal of completing the work in spring 2017. The project also includes the restoration of three stained glass windows.

This has been an enormous project for our small congregation, but has brought us closer together in ways none of us could have imagined. When the work is complete we can point to our steeple and know we played a role in its long history. And the steeple of Second Congregational Church will once again be a guiding beacon to those searching for faith, freedom, and fellowship.

*Submitted by: Irene Maxcy  
Trustee, Second  
Congregational Church  
Warren, ME*



# Along THE WAY

## Congregational Church Of Mount Dora Installs New Minister

A 40-member choir provided the music for the installation of the Reverend Gary Allen Marshall at the Congregational Church of Mount Dora, Florida, on April 30. Ministers from local churches and a representative of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches were on hand for the joyous occasion.

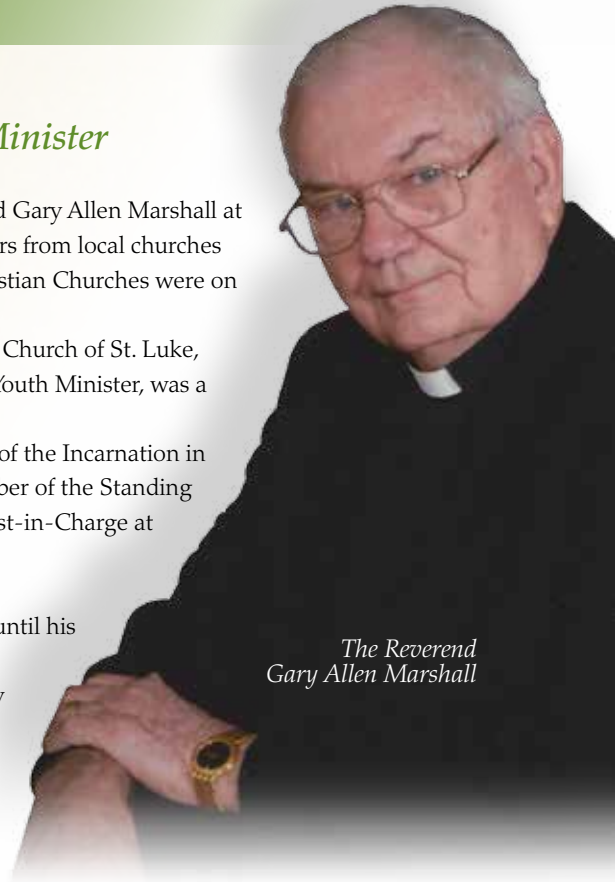
A native of Orlando, Rev. Marshall was ordained Deacon in 1982 at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke, where he taught confirmation classes, preached, assisted at the Eucharist, served as Youth Minister, was a counselor, and served Christian Prison Ministries.

In 1997, he was ordained Priest in the Anglican Church of America at the Church of the Incarnation in Orlando. He became the Canon to the Ordinary, Administer to the Postulants, member of the Standing Committee and continued in youth ministry. Called by the Bishop in 2004 to be Priest-in-Charge at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Waynesville, North Carolina, Rev. Marshall traveled between the two states.

Rev. Marshall was Rector/Priest of All Saints Anglican Church in Palatka, Florida, until his retirement in July 2012, when he moved to Mount Dora with his wife Karen.

Living in beautiful Lake County, the Marshalls became involved in the community and were active in First Presbyterian Church of Mount Dora. He was a friend to the late Rev. Dr. Richard Don and familiar with the Congregational Church of Mount Dora when he left retirement to be of service to the church.

Submitted by: Robin Miller, Head Deacon. Congregational Church of Mount Dora



The Reverend  
Gary Allen Marshall

## Capobianco Book Translated To Chinese

Email from Heaven 3.0, by the Reverend L. J. Capobianco, has been translated into Mandarin Chinese. This latest version of the novel is available on Amazon, along with the English- and Spanish-language versions. The novel was written to offer a message of God's love and comfort to those who have lost a loved one or are grappling with their own mortality.

Len Capobianco was inspired by the growing number of Christians in China, as well as the encouragement of a Chinese pastor who is a fan of the novel and expects it to help China's Christians better understand their faith.





# AccidentalGEEK

## WHERE'S THAT WEBPAGE

*I wanted to read later?* By Dawn Carlson

If you're like most people, you come across lots of articles on the internet that you'd like to read. And, like most people, you don't have time to read them right now. You could add them to your bookmarks, but then you just end up with this long list of both articles and reference sites that take forever to scroll through. So, what's a person to do? Make a "read-it-later" platform one of your go-to tools for saving internet content and time.

I actually use a variety of formats for saving things to read later. My first foray into this world was Pocket (<https://getpocket.com>). Thanks to a little down arrow icon attached to my browser, I can, with one click, save any web page I'm looking at for later access. Pocket saves your web page in an easy-to-read format that can be accessed by your browser or an app on your mobile device. There are share features that allow you to email and save to Twitter, Facebook, and Buffer. Pocket has both a free and a premium platform. (Free is good enough for me.)

Taking the read-it-later platform one step further is Instapaper (<https://www.instapaper.com>), a similar tool to Pocket, but with greater flexibility and in app tools. Instapaper lets you highlight parts of the article and add a note. Very handy if you're wanting to maintain a quote or specific info from the article. Organization becomes easier as well. While Instapaper just saves things in the order you add them, it allows you to set up folders, giving you the option of grouping your reading around specific topics. You have to

do this after saving the article, but it's a quick drag-and-drop action to get things where they need to go.

Instapaper also lets you share the article via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Genius, Pinboard, Evernote and Tumblr. You do have to make the connections to those accounts, but it's fairly easy. You can also set up your Instapaper account to send articles directly to your Kindle for later reading.

One of the best things about Pocket and Instapaper is this – you can read the webpage's content without all the extras – ads, clickbait links, and frames. Just the article, ma'am. Both platforms, of course, let you click back to the original article, in case you miss all that extra stuff.

If Pinterest is something you regularly use and fully understand, you can set up Pinterest boards, as well, even making secret boards so only you see them. This is a fairly easy way to save things for later access. I've done this, especially when saving things all around a topic I want to access later.

You know, the whole idea of a read-it-later platform is that you actually do go back and read it. All three of these options have apps for your mobile devices, making access from wherever you are very simple and letting you finally read those things you've been saving while you're getting the oil changed, sitting through soccer practice, or wasting time in a waiting room somewhere. At moments (or hours) like these, the ability to make the most of down time is a great tool!



*The Rev. Dawn Carlson is a member of North Manchester Congregational Church and pastors The Phoenix Congregational Fellowship - a church without walls. Like many in ministry, she finds wanting to make technology a useful tool and not a painful trouble. If you have technology questions, you can email her at [dawncarl@aol.com](mailto:dawncarl@aol.com) or write to Dawn Carlson, 20 McKinley Blvd, Terre Haute, IN, 47803.*

## Visit to Pilgrim's Presence Mission

In January 2017, the Rev. Peter Smith of First Congregational Church, Hanson, Mass., was part of a joint, short-term mission trip of the First Congregational Churches of Hanson and Thomaston, Conn., to teach at Africa Theological Seminary in Kenya. During a weekend break, Peter and two others traveled to **Pilgrim's Presence**. They met with local seminary graduates who provide on the job training to the rapidly-expanding number of pastors (from six to 59 churches in 20 years), 30 local church leaders, clinic administrators, and a local congregation. Peter (a MOMC member) also preached to the local congregation, while Geoffrey Lipale, director of Pilgrim's Presence, translated.



## Missions Building Facilities & Peace

The sound of hammers fills the air at several mission sites — a sign of good things to come.

Jaime Julian, director of **Christian Mission in the Far East**, Philippines, attended a District Conference in Maguindanao, a Muslim area near the site of the 2015 Mamasapano clash between a Special Action Force and two terrorist groups. The mission has eight congregations in this area now, and they are still doing evangelism work. They believe that even members of the rebel group are included in Christ's plan of salvation. Two pastors and four delegates who attended the conference were once members of

the rebel group. The mission plans to build a semi-concrete church in this area and needs a chainsaw to help in the construction. (Most of their church buildings are made of split bamboo.)

Special note: Their two churches in Surogoa were not affected in the recent earthquake.

Construction work is also underway at **Fishers of Men**, Mexico. A volunteer work team from Pennsylvania recently helped with building of the mission's new home. One of the volunteers was photographed as he headed for another load of cement to pour the floor of the main house. David, eight, the youngest son of mission co-founder Julie Zaragoza, can be seen following along with his own little wheelbarrow!

The Reverend SaDo of the **Congregational Church of Myanmar** has taken on his own building project — a children's hall at Thaukyat Taw Village. The new facility will house the Grace Children's Ministry, seminars, and Sunday worship services.



*A nurse from the Medical Brigade takes a patient's vital signs*

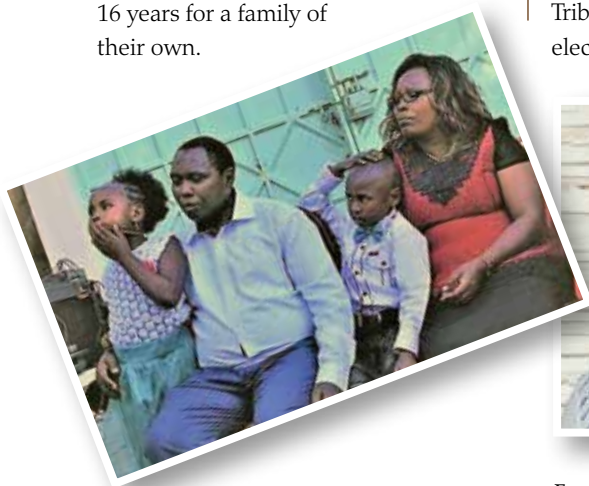
# Missions



## Happy Endings and New Beginnings

Indian Community Fellowship, India, has a preschool program under their Community Development Program. These children recently received graduation certificates for a job well done.

Happy Life Children's Home, Kenya, held a thanksgiving service for two of their children who were adopted by a couple that had waited 16 years for a family of their own.



Cook Native American Ministries, Tempe, AZ, hired a new executive director, Timothy J. "TJ" Hansell. He has a wide range of experience working with Tribal communities, Government entities, elected officials, and key stakeholders.



Executive Director Timothy J. "TJ" Hansell

For more information on any of these missions, or to donate to any of the above projects, please contact Linda Miller at the NACCC Office, 800-262-1620, ext. 1618, or [lmiller@naccc.org](mailto:lmiller@naccc.org).

For a complete listing of NACCC Mission Projects, please go to our website: [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) and click on the Missions tab.

Mission and Outreach  
Ministry Council  
NACCC  
PO Box 288  
Oak Creek, WI 53154

## Prayers are Needed

Indian Community Fellowship and Travancore Church Council, India, are having trouble receiving funds from the US. The Indian government is closing its doors on all NGO's (non-government organizations), claiming that these organizations are stalling economic development in India. **Here is a link to more information:** <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/sep/07/the-indian-government-has-shut-the-door-on-ngos>

Margaret Oladele, founding mother of Christ to the Villages, Nigeria, is suffering from kidney and gall stones. She has come to the U.S. for treatment and is staying with her daughter in New Jersey.

# 140 Years & counting

## Historic Church has Youthful Focus

By Linda Kay Murray, with Colleen Murray and Chris Murray



Youth service at FCC Ceredo

Running across an article about First Congregational Church of Ceredo, West Virginia, was a surprise — and a joy. My late father, the Rev. Dr. Robert Murray, served this church as senior minister twice for a total of 17 years. He would have enjoyed seeing the church's history in print.

Maintaining an historical church has its challenges. We have been working steadily over the last five years to make improvements to our building. Most recently our bell tower was reinforced, painted, and roofed. We also remodeled our kitchen and the cabinetry in our Fellowship Hall, and added new vinyl shakes to the outside to replace older ones that were deteriorating from the weather. Over the years, we have been very frugal with our funding and never outspend what we have in our account,

our traditional way of operating that continues to serve us well.

Ceredo is a small community with just over 1,400 residents. Though preservation of the church facility is a primary concern, the main focus is on our church family. Our membership is growing! In the past three years, over 25 people have joined First Congregational Church of Ceredo. How is this happening with the membership of every other church going south? It is our minister Marty Gute, a great asset to our church. Pastor Marty has an outstanding connection with people. He is also a high school football coach and makes a great connection with our youth. They all love him, and he goes to all their games, dance, and cheer competitions.

Pastor Gute is a "let's do this" type of minister, and gets the congregation involved in everything from "The Backpacks Ministry" for our local schools, to working at the soup kitchen with our kids. Pastor Gute has led a special ministry to our children. He encourages our young people to be involved in the worship hour, serving as ushers, and helping with the Mini Children's Church. He makes them feel that they are an important part of each Sunday's service. Every fall, Pastor Gute also leads a Youth Blessing Service, during which each, individual young person receives a blessing for a great school year. The blessing service is one aspect of a special, service led by the youth themselves.

The make-up First Congregational

Church most definitely has changed over the years. Several young families have joined our church, some of which are fourth generation members! What a blessing. We also have new babies in the congregation (three in the last three years). During that time, our average attendance has grown from 23 to 35.

The article by Steven Straley is indicative that FCCC is considered a historical landmark in the community. Our beautiful church is situated right on the main through street of Ceredo and not far from the City Hall. It is pictured in the Ceredo Museum and in our local soda shoppe, along with other historical landmarks. We meet people all the time who tell us how beautiful the church and its garden are. Over the past two years we re-landscaped our garden, and dedicated it to Marcela Stark, one of our long-time members.

Every May for the past four years, FCCC has sponsored a 5K Steeple Chase Run/Walk. This event has grown into a wonderful community outreach. We hold a huge cookout and invite our entire community. This past year we fed over 120 runners, about 20 helpers and many friends who just came to eat. Everyone is invited to tour the church during the event. We all look forward to the 5K Steeple Chase Run/Walk. This year's event was May 21st.

*We are blessed.*

## First Congregational Church of Ceredo

By Steven C. Straley

The First Congregational Church of Ceredo was established in 1874. It is the second oldest church in Ceredo, following the United Methodist Episcopal Church in 1866. It is also said to be one of only three Congregational churches in West Virginia. The current building, located on the northeast corner of First Street West and C Street, has been in continuous use since 1886. Its distinct appearance is modeled after churches in New England as homage to the original congregation's New England roots.

The First Congregational Church of Ceredo, like all Congregationalist churches, has its origins in the Congregationalism movement. Congregationalism developed in England during the 16th and 17th centuries in protest against the Anglican Church. It stressed in particular the importance of freedom. Congregationalists, also known as Independents, believe that individual churches should be autonomous and independent of any outer hierarchy. Suffering persecution, many immigrated to America in the 1600s and established a large presence in New England.

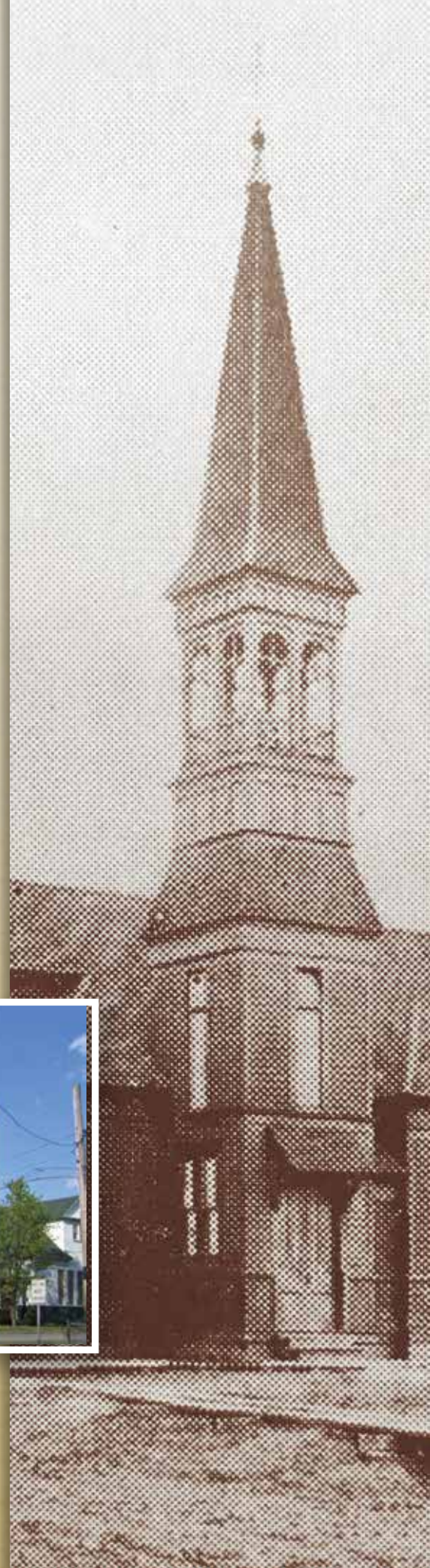
Many of the first inhabitants of Ceredo were New England abolitionists who had been brought by Eli Thayer in the 1850s as part of his project to create a slave-free settlement in a southern slave state. The outbreak of the Civil War and its ensuing destruction resulted in many of these people leaving. A few families did stay however, and

the need arose for them to create their own church. The church was officially established on November 14, 1874. The charter members included Dr. John T. Wharton, Nelly Wharton, Capt. Mark Poore, Addie M. Poore, Catherine H. Osgood, George K. Osgood, Harvey Osgood, Emma Osgood, and Madison Bancroft. A Rev. Haines briefly served as the first pastor before being replaced by Rev. John McKean.

The church originally held services in Crescent Hall (also known as Ceredo House or Thayer Hotel) in the 300 block East of B Street. In January 1883, a building committee was formed to plan construction of a proper church building. The Hoard family was very instrumental in the creation of the church.▶



FCC Ceredo today



## First Congregational Church of Ceredo

Charles Brooks Hoard donated the land for the church; Samuel Floyd Hoard was the architect for the church's design; and Pitt Hoard contributed logs from Twelve Pole Creek to provide lumber for the church's construction. The church was finished and dedicated on June 27, 1886. Accounts differ as to the origins of the steeple's bell; some say it was donated by the Congregational Churches of Cincinnati at the dedication, while a few say it was donated from a steamboat by its captain.



*Pastor Marty Gute*

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"First Congregational Church," by Steven C. Straley, 2017, <https://www.theclio.com/web/entry?id=30207>. Reprinted with permission by Steven C. Straley, and the Appalachian Studies Association.



# Unexpected Ministry *By Michael Glidden*

Often in ministry, there are twists and turns that happen that I just can't explain. I've come to realize that God's ways are definitely not mine. God always has a way of confounding me and teaching me a lesson or two along the way. This happened to me in the summer of 2016.

I have a friend who I'll simply call "Dennis." Dennis was a robust and healthy man who suddenly became ill. He was diagnosed with cancer and given a few months to live. Dennis and I had a good relationship with each other. Before he was sick, we would laugh and have wonderful conversations. You'd have thought that we were brothers. When I saw him in the hospital and, subsequently, at home, I experienced someone very different. I tried to implement all the pastoral skills that I could muster: listening, praying, being present, and just being a friend.

Dennis and I just couldn't connect. I'd try to mention God, but he would deflect the topic. I'd try to mention his children, but he was quick to be defensive. He was getting more irritated with me as the visits continued. My visits with him would always be ten minutes or so as he gave the body language "to move along."

I came to the place that I realized that, maybe, I just wasn't the right person to bring him pastoral care. I began to doubt myself. I decided to leave him alone, not visit anymore, and just let him be. What else could I do?

Something unusual happened a few months later. Rhonda and I were walking in the mall when Dennis' girlfriend approached Rhonda. The girlfriend

whom I'll call "Karen" started to chat with Rhonda. Realizing that I wasn't part of the conversation, I went for a rather long walk. After a while, I met up with my wife and she began to tell me about her conversation with Karen. It just astounded me.

Karen told Rhonda that my visits to Dennis were very appreciated; They meant a lot to her, and my presence with Dennis gave her reassurance that God was with her and helping her through these tough times. She said my prayers and concerns for her boyfriend were giving her hope. Wow! I couldn't believe what I heard! I never realized that, in the end, what I thought was a waste of time ended up being a blessing to an unknown onlooker. She was hearing my conversation with Dennis and taking it all in, albeit oblivious to me!

As I heard this story I couldn't help but think of Jesus' encounter with Mary and Martha at their home. Mary was at the feet of Jesus, but maybe Martha was ministered to in ways that we could never imagine! Maybe Christ's message was intended for Martha!

Since, that encounter, I have been open to how God can use me in pastoral care. I must be slow in judging what God can do or will do — or who He will bless. I must be careful when I think that I am not being used, because I am only a vessel; and God can use me to bless in ways that I may never imagine.

As a pastor of a very small rural church, I sometimes wonder if my messages are being heard? There are times when I feel as if I have just "shown up" without much to do. And then I hearken back to my experience with

Dennis and Karen, and remember the story of Mary and Martha...

*The Rev. Dr. Michael Glidden has been the senior pastor of the Sebago Lake Congregational Church in Standish, Maine, since 2012. He has been pastoring since 1993. Rev. Glidden earned his Master of Divinity Degree in 1995 from Bangor Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2002. He was ordained in 2000. Mike lives in Saco, Maine, with his wife Rhonda.*



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# and SCIENCE

## Not Mutually Exclusive

*(On the Compatibility of Religion and Science)* By Lawrence H. Balleine

Is it a matter of science OR religion, or science AND religion? I would choose the latter, for I believe science and religion need not be mutually exclusive. We can affirm both, although many in our society would choose to affirm one and negate the other.

It all goes back to the beginning: to Genesis and the first five words of scripture: "In the beginning God created..." This is not a scientific statement. It is a declaration of faith. Neither is it an argument FOR the existence of God. It ASSUMES the existence of God. And it assumes that God was at the beginning, and that God created.

Can we prove this initial Biblical statement using empirical or scientific evidence? No. We cannot. But as people of faith, neither do we have to. For later in the New Testament, the letter to the Hebrews indicates: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

Years ago I had the privilege of attending a parochial elementary school. I consider it a privilege because these eight years exposed me to the wonderful stories of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. Additionally, my classmates and I were required to memorize hundreds of Bible passages and the lyrics to several great hymns of the church.

The Biblical approach taken by my elementary school, however, was largely literal; and along with this viewpoint, the interpretation and instruction that the earth is just over 6,000 years old, and that the creation of all things occurred according to the Genesis 1 account – in six days.

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*"Initially, I accepted this instruction without question".*

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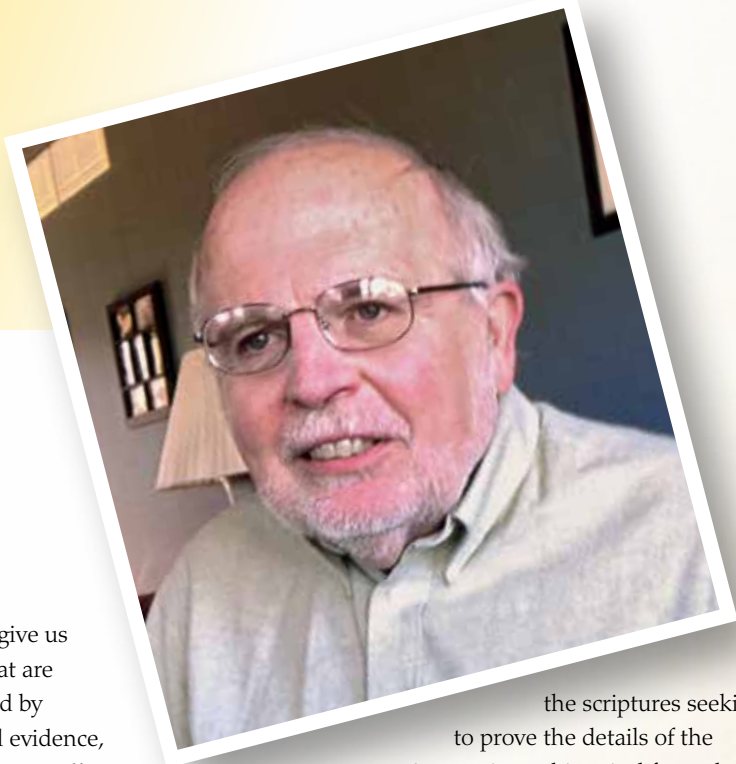
In my middle teen years, however, I developed an appetite for science and I was taught that our planet is actually closer to 4 ½ billion years old. I faced a dilemma. Something had "to give." What "gave" was my elementary school interpretation of the creation account recorded in the first chapter of Genesis.

I soon discovered that a second creation account is found in the second chapter of Genesis. And if read literally – attaching contemporary meanings to the words of the two accounts while seeking to answer: "How did creation occur?" – the stories are not compatible. So I began to ask: "Which one, then, is the truth? And how can the Bible record quite different things on the same subject?"

I was led to a deeper study, initially comparing the two accounts counts. I noticed that they agreed on two basic points: God is the creator; and human beings occupy a special place in God's creation. But the differences in other details, especially the order in which things came to be created, were considerable. Then a wise and gentle pastor led me to consider: "Maybe the creation stories are not explanations of HOW the earth and all its inhabitants were created. Rather, they exist to help us to explore deeper questions, including: What is the purpose of creation, and what is the role of humankind in relationship to both the creation and the Creator?" Most notably, I discovered that when humankind was placed in the garden (earth/environment) and told to "till it and keep it," we were given the responsibility of being good stewards (caretakers) of the creation. Through this conversation I felt I was experiencing an example of what the Rev. John Robinson predicted when he told those of the early Leyden congregation who were about to voyage to the New World aboard the Mayflower: "The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his Holy Word!" Later I would learn the process by which the book of Genesis came to include two creation accounts.

Although I could not have articulated it at the time, I was beginning to realize that science and religion are not mutually exclusive, but rather "two sides of the same coin;" where science





*Lawrence Balleine is a 1975 CFTS graduate and past contributor to The Congregationalist. Now retired, he served as a pastor with Congregational and United Church of Christ congregations for over forty years.*

exists to give us truths that are supported by empirical evidence, while religion offers truths known by faith. Thus, scientific truth is limed by time and space, whereas many religious/spiritual truths lie beyond time and space and are eternal.

I am reminded of a statement from Oliver Thomas, a Baptist minister from Tennessee. In his delightful and profound book: *Ten Things Your Minister Wants To Tell You (But Can't Because He Wants to Keep His Job)* Thomas reminds us that the first creation story is "cast in the form of a poem and may even have been sung in the early Hebrew community. And, like most poems, was never intended to be taken literally." So too, it is noteworthy to learn that the debate between religion and scientific community over creation did not occur until the age of enlightenment when scientific inquiry began moving toward center stage. As Karen Armstrong, in her second presentation of the 2007 William Belden Noble Lecture series at Harvard University stated, "Nobody ever thought of creation as anything but symbolic until the 17th or 18th century."

Why is it then that in succeeding years many who have sought to defend the faith dismissed this symbolic interpretation of creation? And as they have continued to take on a more literal approach to reading and understanding

the scriptures seeking to prove the details of the creation stories as historical facts, they have actually moved away from the understanding of their earlier faith ancestors.

Does not such an approach reduce the stature of faith by adopting a view that reality consists only of that which can be supported by empirical evidence? And if that is our view of reality, does not faith become subordinate to science?


We need to be reminded that the Bible is not a scientific textbook. It was never meant to be one. The Bible is a book of faith, for people of faith, written by people of faith, telling the on-going story of people of faith and their relationship with God.

Thus science may continue to unlock some of the mysteries of the vast universe as well as the tiniest intricacies of a single cell. That is fine. That is its purpose: To discover HOW it all works, and sometimes the WHENS of it all. Science studies the material and phenomena that can be proven or supported by the empirical evidence of seeing, tasting, touching, smelling or hearing. This is something I trust people of faith can embrace.

Meanwhile there will continue to be other mysteries and realities beyond the realm of science. They lead us to the questions and answers of ultimate

meaning and purpose. Introduced at the very beginning – in the two creation stories – these issues continue to be the domain of faith. They can never be proven or disproven by science.

In many ways science can inform faith; and faith can enhance science. Neither need diminish the other. Rather, each can enrich the other. They are not mutually exclusive. There are mysteries of the physical universe that science will continue to unlock, but it is the faith community that will continue to render meaning and purpose to those mysteries. When we allow these two disciplines to work together we will discover a universe more intricate and beautiful than we could ever imagine, and an awesome and yet personal God who calls us by name – a God who continues to be larger than all the names given to God and greater than all the symbols we use to describe God. Indeed the gulf between religion and science is NOT as wide and deep as many assume. It is bridged by an understanding of the nature of purpose of these two "mutually compatible" disciplines.



# BURST *The* Church Bubble

By Rev. Dr. Timothy D. Robert

It was crisp Sunday afternoon in October when a Michigan pastor of a staunchly Reformed church was “caught” throwing a football with the child living across the street. The leaders of his church were deeply disturbed by such “secular” behavior on a Sunday. They were so bothered by their pastor’s “worldly” interaction on the Lord’s Day that they chastised and disciplined him in front of his congregation.

Is that what Jesus sanctioned when, referring to his followers, he said: *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it?”* (John 17:16) Does being “in but not of the world” clearly define “Christian” versus “non-Christian” activities or relationships?

Few Christians I know would explicitly support an extreme division between the sacred and the secular. Yet, do we not unconsciously expect newcomers who walk into our sanctuaries to look, act, believe, and even talk like us? Do we not subtly snub outsiders who are unfamiliar with our church culture, customs, and traditions? Might pride in our Congregational heritage unintentionally create an “us” versus “them” hierarchy? Is this what the Rev. John Robinson birthed with the term “Separatists?”

In 2016 my wife, Lisa, discovered that Rev. John Robinson is her 11th great grandfather. As you can imagine, we were surprised and elated. Robinson was the first Separatist pastor to the first pilgrims who fled the dictates of the Church of England. He basically founded a refugee church in Leyden, Holland, before blessing their pilgrimage to America.

John Robinson was passionate about separating from a corrupt Church of England. His focus was not separation or isolation from the surrounding Dutch culture. Robinson’s clan resisted Queen Elizabeth’s self-appointed role as “Supreme Governor of the Church of England,” not their adopted Dutch society. Robinson himself was engaged in civic and university life in Leyden even as he sought to preserve the distinctive, holy character of his Pilgrim Church.

Jesus made it clear that the Church should keep a creative tension between being his distinctive, holy people while also engaging the world in which it lives. In Matthew 5 he taught that his Church is light in the world, never to be hidden, segregated, or isolated from it. In Acts 17, the apostle Paul modeled this for us when, while in Athens, he engaged the philosophers and mythologies of Greek culture on their terms and turf.

The importance of being light that is not hidden from our surrounding culture cannot be overstated. According to the Barna Group, nearly half (156 million) of the American population (315 million) is unchurched. Associated Baptist Press reports that 40% of the unchurched used to attend regularly, but they stopped because of “past negative experiences.” Lifeway Christian Resources describes indicting reasons for this statistic:

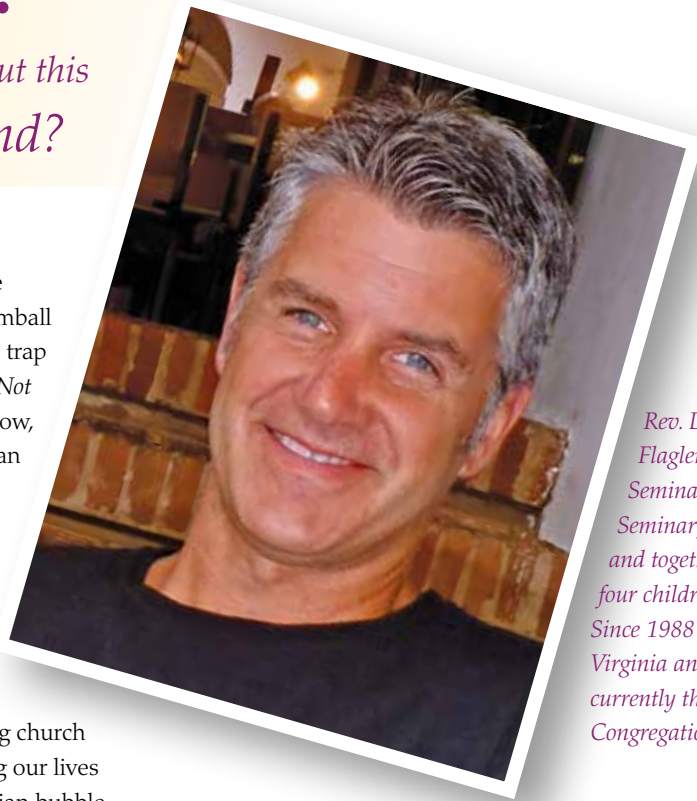
- Christians treating other Christians poorly;
- Christians with “holier than thou” attitudes;
- Believers talking more than they listen;
- Christian refusal to get involved in the lives of the unchurched.

# Ouch!

*What can we do about this alarming trend?*

To start, we need to burst the church "bubble." Pastor Dan Kimball writes about the church bubble trap in his book, *They Like Jesus but Not the Church*. Kimball describes how, the longer a person is a Christian the fewer non-Christian and unchurched friends they have. We get accustomed to "church-world," we speak "Christianese," and we rarely socialize outside the church bubble. Kimball writes, "We are all about making church better for ourselves and making our lives more comfortable in the Christian bubble we have created." Meanwhile, 156 million people are starving for the peace and hope of Jesus Christ. Please note: 156 million people (as a population group) would constitute the eighth largest country in the world!

Jesus, Paul, and John Robinson would counsel us to burst the church bubble. They would urge us to grow together in holiness, but to also shape our congregations to be permeable to the outside, and genuinely welcoming. They would urge us to be authentic expressions of love for the unchurched, and to engage in the culture in which we live. Burst the bubble... your personal bubble... and your congregation's bubble. Creatively and purposefully engage people outside your church and outside your faith; step into their world. Jesus is counting on you and me to be his light and his love-in-the-flesh with 156 million people who desperately need you and me to burst our bubbles.



*Rev. Dr. Tim Roberts is a graduate of Flagler College, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Columbia Theological Seminary. He is married to Lisa, and together they are blessed with four children and three grandchildren. Since 1988 Tim has served churches in Virginia and throughout Florida, and is currently the Senior Pastor at the Stuart Congregational Church in Stuart, Florida.*

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# Loving ALL OUR NEIGHBORS:

## *Christian-Muslim Interfaith Dialogue in Oman* by Joel K. Boyd

*View of the City of Nizwa from  
Nizwa Fort in the Interior*

In January 2017, I had the opportunity to attend an intercultural immersion trip as part of my studies at Western Theological Seminary. I travelled with a group of seminarians and professors to the Sultanate of Oman, a small and peaceful Muslim-majority nation on the edge of the Arabian Peninsula. Oman borders the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen by land, and it is just across the Gulf of Oman from Iran and Pakistan. Oman is a monarchy, currently celebrating over 40 years in the reign of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said. Sultan Qaboos is a descendent of the Al Bu Said dynasty, which has governed Oman since the 1740s.

While in Oman, we studied at the Al Amana Centre in the capital city of Muscat. Al Amana ("The Trust," in Arabic) is a mission of the Reformed Church in America (RCA), and has been serving the Omani people for over 125 years. While in its early years Al Amana helped provide medical care and training, in time these services were transferred into the hands of the Omani people. Beloved by the community, the Al Amana Centre now serves as a center for interfaith dialogue between Christians, Muslims,

and other faith traditions, sponsoring study and residencies by students and scholars from around the globe. In its statement of purpose, Al Amana commits to believing in, and promoting, "a substantial dialogue leading to deeper understanding between Christians and Muslims worldwide. It is guided by the words of Jesus Christ when he commanded his disciples to love their neighbors as themselves." Given the present state of interfaith dialogue and understanding in the U.S. and the surging refugee crisis, my cohorts and I could not have come to a better place at a better time to bear witness to Jesus' words of love.

While at the Al Amana Centre, we met with Ibadī\* Muslim Imams, students of Qur'anic schools, and government officials. We met with both men and women, and explored a wide range of topics, including Christianity and Islam, misconceptions about culture and faith in the U.S. and Middle East, the role of men and women in society and religion, and the way the news, social media, and even the film industry impact our views of one another. Despite what some might fear about a Middle Eastern Muslim-majority monarchy, my cohorts and I engaged in interfaith dialogue openly, and we were



*The corniche in Muscat*

*\* Ibadism is a minority sect within Islam. While Sunni and Shi'a Muslims also live in Oman, the country is the only nation in the world with a majority Ibadī Muslim population.*



*Interior view of The Protestant Church in Oman*

welcomed and treated with kindness and respect as visiting American Christians by our gracious Omani hosts. This was as true of the urban Omani and expatriate population in Muscat as it was of the traditional and relatively more conservative populations in the Interior city of Nizwa and among the Bedouin of the Wahiba Sands Desert. It was an eye-opening experience. Eye-opening, not just because it changed me and my perspective, but because what became clear was that this was not about me or my cohorts. This was not just a trip to see a new place, or to engage new people. It was and is about God, and what God is doing in the world.

As my cohorts and I learned from our new Omani friends about their culture, Ibadi Muslim faith, and way of life, I found that my mind focused more and more on God's presence and in Jesus' love: Where was the Holy Spirit working in all this tension? What does it mean to truly engage Muslims as a Christian in the Middle East, or back home in the U.S.?

These questions still lingered inside when, in early March, I re-connected with our instructor and guide while in Oman, Justin Meyers. A Michigan native, Meyers has served as an RCA pastor and missionary, and is currently the Associate Director of the Al Amana Centre. We spoke via Google Voice on March 3, 2017. Following are highlights from our conversation on interfaith dialogue at Al Amana and how it informs dialogue in a local context in the U.S.

**JB:** What hopes do you have for students returning to the U.S. after being immersed in the Al Amana Centre experience?

**JM:** My hope is that students have good stories about their experiences with Muslims which they can then share with others in the U.S. Having dialogue with Omani Muslims through Al Amana allows students to be able to speak from personal experience. They can tell Christians back home what their conversations were like with Muslims here in the Middle East in Oman. This is a contrast from what some people might feel that they witness from reading about groups like ISIS or Al Qaeda in the news. The truth is that most Muslims are not like these extremist groups. The majority of Muslims I have met are peaceful and loving people. Being able to speak from personal experience allows Al Amana students to help carry on the

narrative of peaceful and tolerant dialogue between Christians and Muslims in their local context.

Another hope for Al Amana, is that returning students can become bridge-builders within their communities. Churches can attend events with area Muslims and engage one another more easily when someone takes the first step. Our hope is that Al Amana students can lead by taking these first steps towards dispelling myths and opening up meaningful interfaith dialogue in local churches.

**JB:** How do you think American Christians can engage their American Muslim neighbors in civil, interfaith dialogue?

**JM:** Scriptural Reasoning (SR)\* is one way American Christians can begin this journey together with Muslims in their context. SR allows Christians and Muslims to be on equal footing, since both the Bible and Qur'an are read as part of the process. This structure ensures that mutual sharing is always part of dialogue.

Another way for American Christians to engage their Muslim brothers and sisters in dialogue on a local level would be for them to patronize any Muslim-owned businesses in their area. This is especially true if there are any new businesses, where Muslims may be new to the region. Having periodic meals at a Muslim-owned restaurant can open up dialogue and be a great way to engage American Muslims in a friendship built on trust and mutual respect.

While it is always encouraged for Christians and Muslims to engage one another peacefully, it might be wise for a pastor or ministry leader to first reach out and meet with an imam one-on-one to establish the relationship before bringing in other members of the congregation or ministry. With pastors and Imams familiar with one another, others can then be brought into this ongoing dialogue among friends.

Along the lines of advice, it is important for Christians to be mindful of any agendas they have in meeting with Muslims. Any suggestion or hint of a Christian agenda to convert or proselytize Muslims can and will easily be found out, and it can be a quick way to ruin what may otherwise be a very fruitful ministry in faithful dialogue. As we often see in the media, there can be a lot of fear on both sides, so keeping agendas out of the mix helps make for more genuine relationship-building. ▶

\* Scriptural Reasoning is an intentional tool for interfaith dialogue. Developed at the University of Cambridge, SR is now being implemented around the world. While in Oman, my cohorts and I practiced SR with Omani Ibadi Muslims at the Al Amana Centre.

## Christian-Muslim Interfaith Dialogue in Oman

**JB:** What advice would you give American Christians that are considering interfaith dialogue for the first time? Any suggested resources they might connect with?

**JM:** I'd recommend that they look at the open letter from the international Muslim community, *A Common Word*, as well as its response from the Christian community in what is called the Yale Response to *A Common Word*. Scriptural Reasoning is a good starting point, too. Another great resource is the book *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* by Kateregga and Shenk. After being immersed in interfaith dialogue through these resources, Christians will learn how we can still engage Muslims while not changing our theology. We can respect one another, disagree about fine theological points, and still remain friends. Another helpful approach to starting out in interfaith dialogue is making use of lots of "I believe" statements. Try to avoid generalizations such as "all Christians" or "all Muslims" and instead stick to what you personally believe, and invite your Christian and Muslim friends to follow suit. While apologetics are important, it is worth noting that interfaith relationships are not built on proving others wrong in theological argument. Speaking from our own faith perspective helps keep us from trying to speak on behalf of others; it lets each person speak about her or his own faith, and it builds trust.

**JB:** How important is Christian-Muslim interfaith dialogue to peace around the world today?

**JM:** In some ways, it is very important, because the extremists on both sides use language built on fear as a recruiting or emboldening tool. Having healthy interfaith dialogue will certainly help this. However, many conflicts are not the result of theological or religious differences, but instead they are caused by issues such as economics, power, and access to electricity, food, water or land. Sometimes religion can become too closely linked with culture and local needs, which confuses the actual issues that are in need of resolution in support of peace. Of course, solid interfaith dialogue can only help these issues, but inter-religious tension alone is not the only source of conflict.

**JB:** Any other details you would like others to know about the Al Amana Centre or interfaith dialogue?

**JM:** What is really important for peace is that others know who people are. This is how dialogue can help. When open, free, and safe, interfaith dialogue can take away many of our assumptions about others. Al Amana is one organization that aims to create this safe space for dialogue in a Middle Eastern context within Oman. Having safe space allows people to encounter one another and to ask questions without fear. Al Amana gets Americans out of their comfort zone, and takes them to an Arab country in the Middle East. In some ways, this makes it easier for students to engage Muslims in a Muslim-majority country. You can still do interfaith dialogue in your own community. One thing you need to be aware of is that the local community lives close to its neighbors, so anyone you



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engage will be in your community. This helps keep us honest, but it can also raise the stakes a little higher when it comes to interfaith dialogue in your home church or ministry. My recommendation would be that Christians have no agenda than to be friends with their Muslim neighbors. Get to know one another, and trust that the Spirit will do its work. This is a great exercise in trusting the Holy Spirit!

In the fall of 2016, I was blessed to start an interfaith conversation in dialogue with a Sunni Muslim imam in the greater Milwaukee area where my family and I live, and where I currently serve as a Christian seminarian and pastor. My friend and I have enjoyed several meetings of open discussion about Christianity and Islam, religion, and culture in the U.S., and have begun to explore ways in which our faith communities can be in closer dialogue, walking together in understanding and in mutual respect. I pray that other Congregationalists and Christians of all denominations and none at all may be moved by the Spirit to engage in interfaith dialogue in their own local contexts, that we may learn even more about how we can love all our neighbors as Jesus taught us.



Justin Meyers

*Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Muscat*



# Advancing THE Congregational Way

By Debra Fulton and Morgan O'Hara



Hubert Goodale

One does not need to be involved in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) or even attend a Congregational church very long before they hear the term “Advancing the Congregational Way.” It is printed on NACCC materials, uttered by members of our leadership, and spread throughout our member churches. It is not only important to us as an organization, and to our member churches, but speaks to the hearts of many of our donors and stakeholders.

Hubert Dana Goodale (1879-1968) was committed to advancing the Congregational Way through his involvement with his church, First Congregational Church of Williamstown, and through a generous planned gift he left to the NACCC. His father, Reverend David Goodale, was a Congregational minister who taught his son the importance of Congregationalism.

As a poultry and cattle geneticist, working at Mount Hope Farm in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Hubert committed his life and career to the advancement of cattle and poultry genetics. His work focused on uncovering the value of index breeding and placing more importance on productive traits. He not only contributed to advancing the study of applied genetics, but he also helped to improve farming through increased production. When Hubert passed away, his wish was that a gift be given to the NACCC, in memory of his parents, who taught him the importance of Congregationalism and the church.

But the story doesn't end here. The bequest from Mr. Goodale did not arrive to the NACCC until shortly after the death of his daughter Marion P. Goodale (1913-2016). In the same fashion that his parents raised him, Hubert taught his two daughters, Hazel and Marion, the importance of advancing the Congregational Way. Marion Goodale attended the First Congregational Church of Williamstown with her family. She became a teacher after graduating college in 1934, and eventually moved back to Williamstown in 1947 where she

lived until her death in 2016. After her passing last year, the NACCC was also notified of her planned gift to the NACCC, in memory of her parents and grandparents.

Belief in advancing the Congregational Way and encouraging the active fellowship of our member churches is based on our understanding of the nature of the local church. The NACCC and many of our supporters believe that God has given the local Congregational church every power and gift necessary for its spiritual life and decision for ministry. Because Christ alone is the head of the church, each church is free to determine its statement of faith, select and ordain its clergy and maintain stewardship of its resources and property. The Congregational Way respects the ability of each church to discern God's intentions and purposes for them, and, therefore, the NACCC does not pass resolutions on social or political issues, nor does it make statements on behalf of or binding upon the member churches.



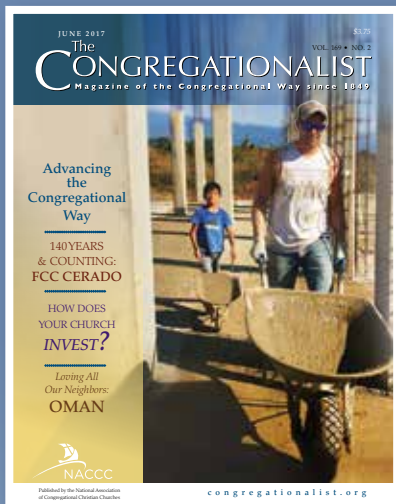
Marion Goodale

The NACCC is extremely grateful for the generous gifts from Hubert Goodale and his daughter Marion, and to their commitment to advancing the Congregational Way. Their support allows the NACCC and its member churches to promote diversity in thought and in theology, while still coming together in fellowship in the name of Jesus Christ.

*This article was prepared by the NACCC Development and Communications staff Debra Fulton, Director, and Morgan O'Hara, Assistant.*



# a **NEW** look



Dear Readers,

With this issue, we are pleased to present a new look for The Congregationalist. Some of the redesign, such as the use of white space, is subtle. Some of it—columns are ragged right instead of justified—is obvious. In general, the design changes are in line with today's trends.

There were several reasons for the changes; first of which was to bring you more content per issue. We are blessed to receive many diverse and thought-provoking contributions of news and articles. Because we typically find ourselves with more content than space, we are forced to hold some material for future issues. This surely will continue to happen from time to time, but the new design will allow us to accommodate more articles per issue.

Going forward, we also plan to expand coverage of our missions, seminarians, local churches, and regional associations—their activities, challenges, and accomplishments. Regular magazine departments have been designed to reflect that plan.

Change is never easy, and there are always bumps along the way. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions as we continue to fine-tune the magazine's design. You are encouraged to contact us with your ideas at [marianne.kingwi@gmail.com](mailto:marianne.kingwi@gmail.com).

*Blessings,  
Marianne King  
Editor, The Congregationalist*



## SEEKING A MINISTER

**Mt. Hope Congregational Church**, located in Livonia, Michigan, is family-oriented with a rich, traditional history. We are currently seeking an approachable, energetic senior pastor who delivers engaging sermons and will shepherd us in our spiritual and congregational growth. Our Bible-centered congregants offer a strong support system for both our members and the community. Both ministerial and pastoral duties, including regular office hours, are expected.

To learn more about this opportunity, please go online to the NACCC website: <http://www.naccsecure.org/Ministries/MinisterialOpportunities.aspx>



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*How does your Church*

# INVEST

*For The Long Haul*

By Rick Bauzenberger



When I was young and pursuing a career at the Trust Department of Mellon Bank, Pittsburgh, I recall the day Charles (Charlie) Ellis came to meet with senior management. While too far down on the corporate ladder to be included in that meeting, there was an unmistakable air of reverence in anticipation of Ellis' arrival. He was, of course, a nationally recognized investment guru/consultant who helped major corporations manage their pension funds. While he has authored many books, his latest one, *The Index Revolution: Why Investors Should Join It Now*, explains why he has come to believe that active investing is ultimately a loser's game.

Earlier in my career, a little-known John (Jack) Bogle launched a new type of publicly traded mutual fund. This fund was designed to mimic the stock market as defined by the Standard & Poor's 500 Index. Not surprisingly, this new approach to investing was met with much skepticism. Brokerage firms scoffed at the idea. How can you take

professional judgment out of the investment decision-making process and expect to produce successful results? Well, as is often said, the rest is history. I suspect not even Bogle knew at the time how his new fund would revolutionize the face of the investment industry. Bogle created Vanguard, a shareholder-owned corporation; and to my knowledge, it is the only one of its kind to this day. With assets surpassing \$4 trillion, Vanguard is the second largest asset management firm in the world.

Your Congregational Investment Trust (CIT) has been managed by Vanguard Institutional Advisory Services for over four years. Over one-third of the \$16+ million in assets is invested in institutional fund shares encompassing a global portfolio of stocks and bonds. And yes, much of the portfolio is indexed.

Such an investment strategy will often elicit questions such as “Why do you only shoot for average performance?” My response is: Average is in the eye of the beholder. The reality is that active investment management performance more often than not falls short of average when average is an appropriate index or composite of indices, especially over long periods of time. Consider the recent Morningstar ranking of the Vanguard 500 Index (VFIAX) in its appropriate category: top 6% for 3 years, top 11% for 5 years, top 19% for 10 years, and top 26% for 15 years.

Jack Bogle goes into great detail explaining the reasons for underperformance by active managers in his numerous books, but much has to do with transaction costs and management fees. Even the best and the brightest have difficulty outperforming their index benchmarks consistently.

So, you don’t have to believe me when I say you can expect superior returns from the CIT. Charlie Ellis and Jack Bogle would probably tell you that our investment philosophy coupled with our indexed approach is the smart way to invest for the future.

While you can easily execute an indexed approach directly with the sponsor of index funds, there are some benefits to employing the CIT for your church’s endowment or meetinghouse fund:

As investment advisor, Vanguard does employ value-adding strategies. The most recent example has been to shorten the duration of the bond portion of the portfolio anticipating rising interest rates.

Utilization of Vanguard’s Admiral and Institutional share classes with very low expense ratios provides a cost advantage.

Aggregation of assets is advantageous. By combining assets from the NACCC, the Foundation, and over 20 member churches, the cost per \$1,000 invested is kept very small. And as more churches participate, the lower the cost per \$1,000 for all participants. By participating in the CIT, member churches help not only themselves, but the NACCC, the Foundation, and other participating member churches as well.

Two levels of oversight are provided: Vanguard and the CIT Oversight Committee.

Have I made my case for why your church should join the CIT family? Bottom line, it would be smart and prudent. Let’s grow the CIT with new member church additions.

Rick Bauzenberger  
Chair, CIT Oversight Committee  
mailto:rbauzenberger@gmail.com

P.S. A representative from Vanguard will be attending future Annual Meetings & Conferences and will be available to answer any questions.

P.P.S. Quarterly investment reports, the CIT Investment Policy Statement, and forms to open an account are available via the NACCC website.

# MY CHURCH

*By Marilyn K. Walker*

**S**ome Churches in the cities  
have backgrounds, ages old,  
with roots from other countries;  
there's history to be told.

Some Churches that are rural  
have left a legacy.  
The freedom of our country  
lies in their history.

Our Church is in the village,  
Its heritage, you know,  
dates back to old New England  
so many years ago.

'Twas back in sixteen hundred  
the pilgrims sailed the sea  
to find a place to worship  
in a land where they'd be free.

Our Church! It, too, has history.  
In eighteen fifty three  
a cornerstone was laid to prove  
their dream, reality.

The members were elated  
to witness that event-  
the culmination of a dream-  
imagine what that meant!

Recalling it, I'm thankful  
that God showed them the way  
to build this place of worship  
that we call ours today.

*MY CHURCH was written at the request of my minister for the 140th Anniversary celebration of the first Congregational Church of Saugeryes in December 1993. It was published in the Open Door, the Church newsletter. I have been a member of the Church since 1942.*

*Marilyn K. Walker*



# Necrology 2017



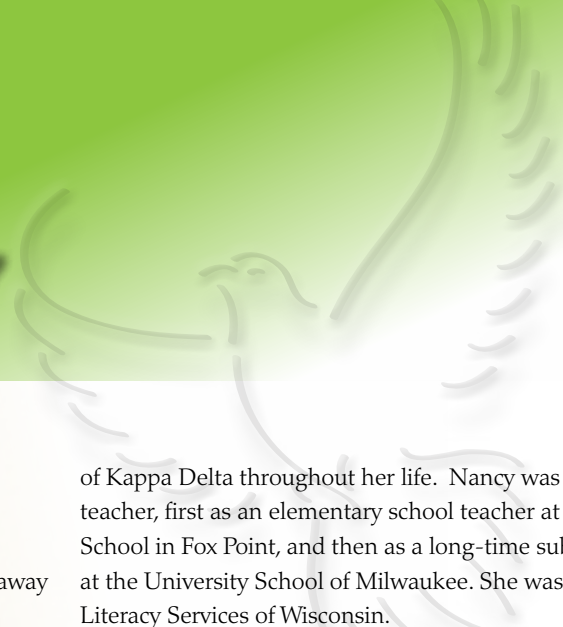
## *Nancy Lee Holz* (1938 - 2017)

Nancy Lee Holz passed away April 3, 2017. A member of First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, she was very involved in its life and leadership. From 2012 to 2016, Nancy served as a Year Round Delegate to the National

Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC).

Nancy was an avid supporter of the NACCC and the Congregational Way. Her husband, Harry Holz, is a member of the NACCC Board of Governors.

A lifelong resident of Wisconsin, Nancy received her teaching degree from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where she joined Kappa Delta sorority. She remained an active member



of Kappa Delta throughout her life. Nancy was a committed teacher, first as an elementary school teacher at Dunwood School in Fox Point, and then as a long-time substitute teacher at the University School of Milwaukee. She was also a tutor at Literacy Services of Wisconsin.

Nancy was an active participant in her local community, especially the Elm Grove Woman's Club, Dow Janes Investment Club, and the Western Racquet Club, where she formed many cherished friendships.

She is survived by her husband of nearly 55 years, Harry Holz, three children, Pamela (Christopher) Rupright, Bradley Holz and Erika (Kyle) Pond, as well as six grandchildren, David and Emily Rupright, Justin, Ryan, Margaret and Lauren Pond, who were her pride and joy.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate memorials to First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, or the American Cancer Society.



## *Ruth E. Guerette* (1953 - 2016)

Ruth E. Guerette passed away December 9, 2016. She was pastor at Kenduskeag Union Church, Kenduskeag, Maine, from 2006 until 2014.

Nancy was born October 31, 1953, in Connecticut. She received her Bachelor

of Science in Secondary Education and a master's degree in Secondary Education. Ruth earned a doctoral degree in Religious Studies.

Ruth enjoyed sharing her many interests, including singing, reading, cooking and gardening. She attended Carmel Union Congregational Church, South Levant, and Calvary Chapel in Maine. Most recently, Ruth attended Harvest Chapel of Levant.

Ruth was a member of the Golden Harvest Grange, Eastern Star, American Legion Auxiliary, as well as several other organizations.

Ruth is the daughter of the late Thelma (Small) Butler and Raymond Small, and step-father Marshall Butler.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Robert J. Guerette and son, Paul Guerette.

Ruth is survived by sons, Brian Guerette, Sr. (Laurie), and Jason Guerette (Danielle) and their families; a special grandson Brian Guerette, Jr., who lived with Ruth for several years; brother Louis; sisters, Mary Rogers, Linda, McKusick and Karen Small, as well as special loved ones, Mike Patin and family.

Services were held December 18 at Harvest Chapel.

## Ordinations

*First Congregational Church, Anaheim, California* ordained the Rev. Emily Miller-Todd with the concurrence of a vicinage council, February 26, 2017.

*First Congregational Church of Marshfield, Massachusetts* ordained the Rev. John A. Robie with the concurrence of a vicinage council, April 22, 2017.

*Union Congregational Church of Oakville, Connecticut* ordained the Rev. Jacqueline Ramos, April 30, 2017.

*Sandstone Congregational Church of Jackson, Michigan* ordained the Rev. Justin Nierer with the concurrence of a vicinage council, April 22, 2017.

## Recent Calls

*Congregational Church of Mount Dora, Florida* has called the Rev. Gary Marshall as pastor.

*Plain Congregational Church of Bowling Green, Ohio* has called the Rev. Martin Braemer as pastor.

*Wachogue Congregational Church of Springfield, Mass.* has called the Rev. Renzo Ventrice as pastor.

## In Search Senior Minister

Chiltonville Congregational Church, Plymouth, Mass.  
Duluth Congregational Church, Duluth, Minn.  
El Dorado Community Church, Eldorado, Calif.  
First Church of Christ, Lynn, Mass.  
First Congregational Church, Ashland, Neb.  
First Congregational Church, Clarkston, Mich.  
First Congregational Church, Emporia, Kan.  
First Congregational Church, Interlachen, Fla.  
First Congregational Church, Laingsburg, Mich.  
First congregational Church, Marshfield, Mass.  
First Congregational Church, Portland, Mich.  
First Congregational (Road) Church, Stonington, Conn.  
Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Mayflower Congregational Church, Lansing, Mich.  
Mayflower Congregational Church, Mansfield, Ohio  
Olivet Congregational Church, Olivet, Mich.  
Orthodox Congregational Church, Petersham, Mass.  
Ozaukee Congregational Church, Grafton, Wisc.  
Rockwood First Congregational Church, Rockwood, Mich.  
Second Congregational Church, Jewett City, Conn.  
St. Johns Church, Idalia, Colo.

## Associate/Assistant Minister

United Church of Marco Island, Marco Island, Fla.

*Dear Ms. King, Editor,*

I have great respect for Dr. Larson and his history of service to God and our Congregational Denomination, however, I take umbrage with one section of his article on "Turf Battles" in the March 2017 Congregationalist. Specifically the section on page 10 subtitled "You're Fired...Not".

I find it troubling, to say the least, that his "Case in point" example apparently equates a "convicted, unrepentant child abuser" with someone who is ostensibly either "disruptive, abusive and aggressive" or as a "troublesome and ineffective member." There is a reason why "child abusers" in our society are required to register with Law Enforcement and remain separate from venues that care for our most innocent and vulnerable members, our children. If I as a professional in Georgia knowingly allow a violation of that character to exist I am personally liable for that breach and my "institution" is as well. That is only the "legal" qualm I have with that argument which Dr. Larson presents.

Theologically I feel it is flawed as well. In Scripture an unrepentant sinner is never noted as "forgiven" (i.e. the "woman taken in adultery" John 8:3, uncondemned by Jesus, but directed to "go and sin no more," etc.). And, as the Easter season approaches, when a condemned thief confesses to Christ Himself from the cross, Jesus pardons him but he must still pay the ultimate price of his sinful behavior.

We seem to have conflated the amazing grace of forgiveness with an idea of release from accountability. We all as recipients of God's grace have the ability to share the hope of redemption with all our fellow sinners. But we do not act in love by allowing a person to remain in their sin. I feel we as Church leaders and members of our Covenant Communities have a particular responsibility to help each other honestly address sin in our daily walk and with God's help repent of it.

*Respectfully,  
Rev. J.R. McAliley III  
Center Congregational Church  
Atlanta, GA*

It was with great sadness that I read of the passing of Karl Schimpf. It is hard to put into words the spiritual strength which he exuded and the nurturing grace which he offered to all whom he met. In just the few times that I heard him preach, he influenced my life. Karl was God's gift to us all and I will never forget him.

*Craig Walker  
Founding Pastor, Retired  
Desert Congregational Church  
Twentynine Palms, CA*

# 2017 CALENDAR

**JUNE 23**

**Quiet Day Retreat: From Wombs to Tombs**

The Lillian E. Smith Center, Piedmont College, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. Contact Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, drcapacker@gmail.com.

**JUNE 24-27**

**NACCC 63rd Annual Meeting & Conference**

Demorest, Georgia. Go online to [www.naccc.org](http://www.naccc.org) for information.

**JULY 6-11**

**International Congregational Fellowship (ICF)**

Cape Town, South Africa. Go online to [www.internationalcongregationalfellowship.org](http://www.internationalcongregationalfellowship.org) for information.

**JULY 10**

**General copy deadline for The Congregationalist**

September 2017 issue. Contact Marianne King, editor@naccc.org or 800-262-1620, ext. 1624.

Save The Date - 2018



**JUNE 23-26**

**NACCC 64th Annual Meeting & Conference**

San Diego, California.

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Copy deadline for each issue is noted in the previous issue's "Calendar" section.

Letters to the Editor are welcome. All letters may be edited for clarity and length. We regret we cannot publish or respond to all letters.

The NACCC reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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Single copies may be purchased from the National Association office for \$3.75 plus \$3.20 to cover shipping and handling.

We seek and gratefully accept voluntary donations to help keep this magazine in print. Donations are tax-deductible except for the first \$15 of donation per subscription received by the taxpayer per year.

The Congregationalist | ISSN 0010-5856 | Postage paid at Madison, WI 53714-9998. Published quarterly by the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, 8473 S. Howell Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53201-0288.

Periodicals postage paid at Madison, WI and additional mailings offices.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Congregationalist 8473 S. Howell Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53201-0288.

*The Congregationalist Online* - Our Web site, [congregationalist.org](http://congregationalist.org), features PDF files of the current issue plus back issues and a searchable index of all articles. Each new issue is posted on the Web when the printed version is mailed, so you can read it online days or even weeks before the printed copy reaches your mailbox. Enjoy!

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Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849



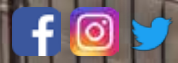
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